

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

February 2, 2009

Protect Our Streams from Mining Wastes
Become an Original Cosponsor of the Clean Water Protection Act

Dear Colleague:

We urge you to join us in protecting water quality and the quality of life of those affected by mountaintop mining by becoming an original cosponsor of the Clean Water Protection Act.

Mountaintop removal, a mining method where the top of a mountain is removed to extract thin seams of coal, permanently destroys streams, forests and mountains. The broken rock, or "excess spoil" from this process is usually dumped into nearby valleys, creating "valley fills" that cover hundreds of acres of land and bury hundreds of miles of streams.


According to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) released in 2003 to accompany the proposed Stream Buffer Zone rule, mountaintop removal mining has already buried and polluted over 1,200 miles of streams in the Appalachian region. The DEIS also found that the impacts of mountaintop removal valley fills will ultimately have a "disproportionately large impact on the total aquatic genetic diversity of the nation."

Our bill would amend the Water Pollution Control Act to clarify that "fill material" regulated under federal law cannot be waste material. It is simply inappropriate to allow the excess spoil from this type of mining to be dumped in mountain streams where it can pollute waterways, fill valleys, and in some cases, potentially endanger the lives of area residents.

Please join us in supporting the Clean Water Protection Act to protect our waterways by prohibiting the dumping of mining fill into rivers and streams. To become an original cosponsor, or for more information, please contact Tim Del Monico (Pallone) at 5-4671 or Jason Edgar (Reichert) at 5-7761.

Sincerely,


FRANK PALLONE, JR.
Member of Congress


DAVE REICHERT
Member of Congress